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HEADLINE: U.S. SENATOR SAXBY CHAMBLISS (R-GA) HOLDS HEARING ON FY 2004 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION:
NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE PERSONNEL

SPEAKER:

U.S. SENATOR SAXBY CHAMBLISS (R-GA), CHAIRMAN

LOCATION: WASHINGTON, D.C.

WITNESSES:

THOMAS F. HALL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESERVE AFFAIRS

BOB HOLLINGSWORTH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYER, SUPPORT OF
THE GUARD AND RESERVE

MAJOR GENERAL RAYMOND F. REES, ARNG, ACTING CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL JAMES III, ANG, DIRECTOR AIR NATIONAL GUARD

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROGER C. SCHULTZ, ARNG, DIRECTOR, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES R. HELMLEY, USAR, CHIEF, ARMY RESERVE

VICE ADMIRAL JOHN B. TOTUSHEK, USNR, CHIEF, NAVAL RESERVE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DENNIS M. MCCARTHY, USMCR, COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES E. SHERRARD III, USAFR, CHIEF, AIR FORCE RESERVE

BODY:

U.S. SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE: SUBCOMMITTEE ON
PERSONNEL HOLDS A HEARING ON FY '04 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION FOR
THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

MARCH 19, 2003

SPEAKERS:

U.S. SENATOR SAXBY CHAMBLISS (R-GA)

CHAIRMAN

U.S. SENATOR SUSAN COLLINS (R-ME)

U.S. SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE (R-NC)

U.S. SENATOR JOHN CORNYN (R-TX)

U.S. SENATOR BEN NELSON (D-NE)

RANKING MEMBER

U.S. SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA)

U.S. SENATOR MARK PRYOR (D-AR)

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CHAMBLISS: Good afternoon. The subcommittee will come to order.

The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony on the military and civilian personnel programs of the National Guard and Reserve in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal 2004.

And I will tell you that, as all of you know, we've just come off a vote and my colleagues are going to be joining us here from time to time and we're going to proceed without Senator Nelson being here, but we may get interrupted. When he comes, your testimony may get interrupted if he wants to make a statement at time, or we'll allow him to make it whenever.

Our subcommittee hearing last week provided important insights into the legislative agenda and priorities of the Department of Defense. The DOD and military coalition witnesses gave us a broad overview of active duty and Reserve component, military and civilian personnel programs and offered various suggestions for legislation.

Secretary Hall, you were present with undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, Dr. David Chu, at that hearing. And he provided very helpful testimony. Thank you for returning today to assist the subcommittee on focusing more directly on issues affecting the National Guard and Reserve.

It is well understood that this nation's reliance on the Guard and Reserve to ensure successful achievement of our national security mission has never been greater. The Reserve components comprise 1.2 million service members, approximately 47 percent of the nation's total military force. While they are integrated into the total military force, these service members are citizen soldiers who play a dual role as both professional military personnel and responsible citizen in their communities.

And I will say that I am extremely proud of the fact that the 116th Air Control Wing, based at Robins Air Force base in my former congressional district and in my state, is a program and a unit of which I am personally proud. The blended unit — the integrated unit between the Guard and the active force is working extremely well. And they — it was a very seamless integration and accepted by both sides for exactly what it is and that is to provide a greater benefit for the men and women of every branch of our armed forces who need the services of the Joint Stars program.

More than 90,000 reservists have supported Operation Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, alone. They continue to be involved in many ongoing contingency operations worldwide and represent critical elements in our homeland defense efforts. In fact, the contribution of the Reserve has increased dramatically since the mid-1980s, from approximately one million man days of mission support to nearly 13 million man days, in recent years.

Several key issues are associated with activation of increasing numbers of reservists. These include potential earning reduction, family support issues and access to health care.

I would like to commend the Department of Defense for rapid implementation of policy changes for Reserve members and their families that simplify access to health care through the TRICARE program. Our hearing today will enable us to further examine departmental policy regarding the mobilization of reservists and the nature of duties they are performing. Additionally, it will allow us to focus on the unique problems being experienced by Reserve component soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and their families as they answered, once again, the nation's call to action.

I anticipate we will learn a lot — we will learn more about the support being provided to Guard and Reserve personnel by their service and by their employers.

I want to emphasize again today our country has the best military force in the world. And that force includes members who, in addition to their regular careers and family obligations, have agreed when called upon to set their lives aside and serve their country. The numbers of mobilized Reservists, Guardsmen is staggering. From my state of Georgia, the 221st Military Intelligence Battalion from Atlanta, the 94th Airlift Wing from Dobbins and the 4th Supply Battalion from Albany are just a representative few of the many components that having called upon to support this contingency. We truly appreciate the services of the men and women.

It is our obligation and responsibility to ensure that the transition to and from military service is as least disruptive as possible. We must provide the support and quality of life programs that show our Guard and Reserve members that we will take care of them and their families.

I look forward to hearing the testimony today.

We have three panels before the — before us this afternoon. First we will hear from Mr. Tom Hall, assistant secretary for Reserve affairs, and Mr. Bob Hollingsworth, executive director of National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Mr. Hall, we welcome you back this afternoon. And let me assure you that your presence before the subcommittee is not going to be required every week. We will give you a break every now and then.

But we also welcome you, Mr. Hollingsworth.

And we — our second panel will be the chiefs of the Guard. And our third panel is the Reserve components.

As I said, if Senator Nelson comes in during the middle of your testimony, we will interrupt or wait, depending on what he desires to do.

So, gentlemen, thank you for being here today and since this hearing is getting started a little late, we would appreciate you keeping your remarks brief as possible. But we look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Mr. Hall?

HALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a combined very short statement for Mr. Hollingsworth and myself.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear, again, before this committee. Today, as we meet, there are almost 212,000 Guardsmen and Reservists activated and serving alongside their active duty counterparts in virtually every operation our military is undertaking throughout the world.

These young men and women are proud to serve and are prepared to meet any demands placed upon them. It is our deep commitment to the mothers and fathers of America that had entrusted the lives of these children to us that we ensure each and every one of the Guardsmen and Reservists is given the right training, the right equipment and the support they need to serve their country. In accomplishing this, we don't want to have one more were one less Guardsmen or Reservist than we need on active duty at any one time. We want to return them to their families and to their jobs the moment they are not needed.

We are totally committed to serving them, their families and their employers.

As you mentioned, I am pleased to be accompanied today by Mr. Bobby Hollingsworth, who is our executive director of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. He brings a very unique perspective on the employers of America and the challenges we face in this area.

In addition, I'm happy to report that with Mr. Hollingsworth, as a retired two-star Marine general, and me, you have today a Navy-Marine Corps team representing 76 years of combined service to our nation.

CHAMBLISS: Thanks to both of you for that.

HALL: We're both very proud of every day of our service and we're both proud to be serving today.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, that's the end of my statement. We stand ready to answer any questions.

CHAMBLISS: Has a Navy man ever been that short?

(LAUGHTER)

That's pretty good, Secretary.

Well, thank you very much. And, again, we appreciate both of you being here.

And, Senator Nelson, we went ahead and started since we were running behind anyway.

But I would like, at this time, to call on my good friend and my colleague, Senator Ben Nelson, from Nebraska who — with whom we have already been working very closely to make sure that we do what's necessary, from a Personnel Subcommittee standpoint, see that our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are looked after.

And, Ben, any comments you'd like to of the make at this time?

BEN NELSON: I thank you, Senator Chambliss. Mr. Chairman, it's really a pleasure to be here. I apologize for being a little tardy — trying to get out of the vote and get back here.

I want to thank you for being here as part of this panel is afternoon. Obviously, it's a very important hearing at a very critical time for our military services. We are here today to discuss the future of our Reserve components — National Guard and Reserves — as our nation is prepared to go to war.

Our Reserve components are almost half of our total military forces and its common knowledge that our nation cannot carry out our — it cannot carry out any significant military operation without the participation of the National Guard and Reserves. And the Reserve components are, without a doubt, full partners in the total force.

In the past 18 months, for example, we of mobilized more than 230,000 Reserve component personnel for service all over the world. And they have performed magnificently.

And today we have — we have mobilized almost 22 — or 212,000 Guard and Reserve personnel who stand alongside our active component personnel, poised for war.

Our troops have responded remarkably well to call to service. And despite the fact that many receive what appears to be and seems to be unrealistically short notice of their call to active duty — and some suffered a loss in pay and all had to leave their jobs and their families — by and large, our Reserve component service members have enthusiastically reported for duty to do what they have been trained to do. And we are all very proud of them.

Overall, I think that we can grade this mobilization as a huge success. However, that doesn't mean that we let down our guard and call it good enough. And I believe that there are lessons to be learned from this mobilization that will help us to do even better in the future should we ever have another large-scale mobilization.

So I trust that our witnesses will help us to discern these lessons so that we can, in fact, learn them and we can — we can prepare to respond to them.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to welcome all of the witnesses. And I look forward to working with you not only today, but in the many days ahead on this and other important Reserve and personnel issues.

Thank you.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

Secretary Hall, you have indicated in your statement filed with the committee that the department is studying pay and compensation for Reservists. But I would like to get your thoughts today on the importance of the Selective Reserve Montgomery GI Bill and the need for improvements in that rate of payment.

How important do you think the Selective Reserve Montgomery GI Bill benefit is in recruiting individuals for service in the Reserve? And do you — do you agree that the current rate of payment needs to be increased?

HALL: Well, the Montgomery GI Bill has always been one of our most important tools. We owe a lot to Mr. Reserve — Senator Montgomery, as we call him, who introduced this. Throughout the time it's been in effect, it's been an important recruiting and retention tool. The department has always supported modifications to this bill. We applauded the extension of the eligibility period that happened last year from 10 to 14 years.

The Reserve portion of the bill, as you know, is different from the active duty. And it's been tied to a slightly different index — the consumer price index. Thus, as we proceeded through the economy, there was a gap which has developed. And a couple of years ago it was about 47 percent of the active duty — the Reserve bill. That has reduced to about 30 percent now because of the CPI — tying it to that.

And Senator Collins has introduced or is going to introduce a bill which might move that percentage back to 50 percent. We agree that we need to take a look at that percentage and that gap and we are committed, in the department, to examining it because we think this bill is one of our finest pieces of legislation throughout the years to support the Guard and Reserve. So we are committed to looking at it — seeing if the gap is right and working with you, if it's not, to make it right.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

Mr. Hollingsworth, in your written statement, you describe the efforts of the military member support and Ombudsmen's

Services Directorate and the informal mediation service that it provides. I know that the volume of calls you received — over 500 calls a week since January of 2003 — what are the problems between employers and Reservist employees that typically lead to requests for informal mediation? And how are we doing generally with that particular aspect of this bill?

HOLLINGSWORTH: Sir, I've got good news to report. As this thing has unfolded, the closer we get to the war effort here, the more positive the calls have become. In the last week or so, they have become, "What can we do to help?"

HOLLINGSWORTH: And that's a — that's a great news from what our employers think of our Guard and Reserve out there today and just the incredible job that they're doing out there.

But just to kind of give you a synopsis of what happens on a day-to-day basis as we get calls that do create some controversy out there, most of them are simple misunderstandings of the law, either on one side or the other. And our job is to mediate those. And we've got 4,200 incredible volunteers, you know, throughout the country and in Europe that do our mediation for us. You know, we run them through our Ombudsmen course. A lot of them have some really good personal attorney training. But beyond that, these guys are really dedicated Americans that care about the young men and young women and they care about the fact that the employers tremendously support our Guard and Reserve.

And as we go through the process, when they call our office, we refer these young men and young women to the — or their employers, back to the states so it can be handled on a local level, because that's where we want to develop those personal relationships between our ESGR membership and the employers that support our Guard and Reserve.

So then as they resolve the issues — which in over 95 percent of the cases, they do — then they can resolve it at the local level. If there is something that becomes so untenable that there is — there — that there is a situation where nothing can be resolved by mediation, then we take that, send it to the Department of Labor and let those folks do the litigation part of that.

But we're happy to report that those cases are such a small percentage and the wonderful employers supporting the Guard and Reserve guys (ph) out there are doing an incredible job of mediating these situations.

CHAMBLISS: Secretary Hall, in your written testimony, you discuss the ongoing examination within DOD of the Reserve component to better organize and equip it to contribute to the national defense. You've had an extensive background with the Naval Reserve and I would like to know your views on the Navy's request to reduce the selective Reserve end strength by 1,900, as well as your views on necessary organizational changes.

What do you think is the justification for the 1,900 reduction? What are your personal views about changes needed in the organization and manning of the Naval Reserve to better augment the active force, achieve the correct skills balance and best contribute to missions assigned to the Navy?

HALL: Well, as you know, I commanded the Naval Reserve for four years — from '92 to '96 — and during that time, participated in a — in a downsizing from about 132,000 to 96,000 when I left. It's — now rests at 86,000. I have spoken with the CNO, Admiral Clark, about his views. And what I can tell you is that his commitment and I think the Navy's commitment is to ensure that the Naval Reserve is structured correctly, is fully integrated on the active side and meets the mission demands of the Navy. And in some cases, that will — that will involve change. It will be different than when I commanded it, six years ago.

I think the ideas that have been proposed that I know about, which the Navy could speak to better than me, involve better integration of the selected Reservists within units — some cases blended units, very much like the Air Force has had and very successfully, where you blend the units together, flying the same kind of equipment with the same training standards.

And I believe it is a commitment on the part of the Navy that that particular end strength that they have asked for best supports both the active and Reserve side, better integrates the Reserve to meet the mission and commitment to the Navy.

CHAMBLISS: Does it have anything to do with the lesser number of ships that we're floating in the Navy now?

HALL: You would, I think, have to ask Admiral Clark that, but not in my view. What it is is an attempt, I think, to better use and better integrate the Guard and Reserve, but nothing that I know of to do with less ships.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

Mr. Hollingsworth, I'm sure you'll agree that it's troubling that some Reservists who are college and are mobilized may

be losing credits and tuition. This has been a constant problem that we've had to face. I'm glad to see that some states have taken action to prevent abuse, but more action may be necessary.

Please share with us your view of the extent of this problem. And how responsive have colleges and universities been to requests for relief for students? What's the Committee on Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve doing to address this problem?

HOLLINGSWORTH: Yes, sir. I will not deny that there is a problem with that, but I would be happy to report, sir, that it's not as serious as we think because we don't get all of those calls on that because, you know, the people think of us as employer support.

But we try to get the word out to the young men and young women that if you do have a problem in that area, we are going to take that on for you because as we did our strategic planning last year, we looked at where we were as an organization and how we were supposed to support all of those people out there. And we found that about one-third of these young men and young women are involved in some type of higher educational process.

We had no programs to support that, so we really jumped ourselves into high gear to really start looking at that.

And, Senator Nelson, you'd be happy to know that one of the things I'm trying to do is develop these personal relationships with the college and university president. I've spoke to the University of Nebraska president there in Lincoln. And he has really been supportive.

And what we're trying to do, sir, is beyond just not getting the folks back there — their tuition and their room and board and the other things that apply there — one of the most valuable things we have, as human beings, is our time. And if you take a young man or young woman that spends a certain amount of the semester in college trying to earn college credits and suddenly pull him away from there, he's lost that time. Well we can give the money back, but, you know, that doesn't solve the whole problem.

We think that we should go farther than that and we have — we have the capability from an information technology perspective that we can continue their education through distance learning. And those are the things we're approaching.

And we've got a model program that's been established that we're going to develop more fully and take it to all the states and all the universities. And so far, anyone that I have talked to at the college president level are extremely supportive of this.

And, now, you know, but the devil is always in the details. And the people that will really make this work or not work are the professors, you know, because they are the ones that were going to have to do the extra work to develop the curriculum that goes into an IT perspective so we can kind of push this out.

Now, this won't work in all of the cases because, you know, if you're taking a chemistry lab, of course, you can't do that with IT. But certainly if a young man or young woman is taking some of the humanities courses, economics, English, geography — these things lend themselves very well to the continuation of their education while they're on active duty.

Now, not all of the people — because some of them are in, you know, pretty severe combat conditions — can take advantage of that. But if it's someone that's doing things in the Sinai — if they're in Kosovo, you know, they have access to these things and they can — they can continue their education.

And that's where we are pursuing from the Employers for the Guard and Reserve perspective. You know we want to be proactive. We don't want to wait until there's problems that come along and have to deal with problems. We want to take care of these before they become an issue with the — with the student and with the colleges and universities.

So I can rest assured — you can rest assured, sir, that we are — we are going to attack this problem. We're not going to just sit by and wait for something to develop — that we're going to be really out on the front of this thing. And it needs to be done because these folks need that kind of protection.

HALL: Mr. Chairman, I might say there is another element to attack this problem and it's called the Serviceman's Opportunity College. I don't know whether you have heard about that, but it's a consortium of about 1,350 people — colleges that have signed up throughout the country. And the Serviceman's Opportunity College — it's a strange name for it — probably ought to be named something different, but it's a group of 1,350 colleges and representatives that have signed up to be willing to arbitrate any of the problems with tuition.

And we have used that. We used it in the Gulf War — in the post-Gulf War and we're using it now. And we refer cases to them. And we've been very effect locally because they see the professor, they talk to the college. And about 90 percent plus have been arbitrated in favor of the students, in fact, near 100 percent. And we're using that mechanism and it's a consortium of — have signed up — 1,350, which blankets the country.

CHAMBLISS: Senator Nelson?

BEN NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hall, in your prepared statement, you discuss a DOD legislative initiative to extend hostile fire and imminent danger pay to Reserve component members on inactive duty. Now, the reason provided for this proposal is to ensure eligibility for these special pays based on the nature of the danger faced, not based on the duty status of the service member.

Can you tell us a little bit more about what "inactive duty status" means and how someone on this status could be in a position that would warrant hostile pay — hostile fire and imminent danger pay?

HALL: I was not in the Pentagon on 9/11, but perhaps that is the — that tragic event is the one to reference as the beginning of this idea. And on inactive duty, there are many different categories that Reservists can be, but IDT or inactive duty for training drills or in — you're in a drill period and you were in the Pentagon. We had people at that time who were on drills. They were not recalled who could either have been killed or maimed.

So it is to allow in those circumstances where you might be in an area that no one predicted would be hostile fire — no one predicted that would happen, but by circumstances you're caught in that on a drill and unless we have this legislation, then those benefits to you and your family might not occur.

So I think it came from the tragic events of 9/11 and a recognition that we must protect our young men and women no matter what status they are in.

BEN NELSON: So the determination would have been made after the fact, not prior to the fact.

HALL: That's right. And we could not, I guess, anticipate what would happen, but we want to in the future...

BEN NELSON: Right.

HALL: ... so that when that is declared, after the fact by competent authority, then you would get your benefits.

BEN NELSON: I understand.

In your prepared statement, you talk about the ChalleNGe and Starbase Civil Military Programs that you administer. And these programs are very — obviously, very highly regarded here, in the Senate. They are great examples of how the Department of Defense can reach out to disadvantaged youth and guide them towards becoming good citizens.

Could you describe briefly for us these programs and tell us whether state funding shortages are having any impact on them at the present time?

HALL: Well, both of you gentlemen, of course, have them in your states. They are wonderful groups. I have visited them — the ChalleNGe Program, which, as you know, with the 22 weeks of training for our at-risk youth, has \$65 million in the budget for this year for that program. It's been a very successful program.

Part of the challenge, though, frankly — and you've hit upon it — is the state funding. And what we are discovering is many of the states, because of the severe pressure on the state budgets, this program is beginning to compete with other kinds of programs. And the state's share might not be able to be borne by the state. That should be of concern, certainly to them because these are the local youth. The government is — the federal government is committed to its share. And those — that \$65 million appears to be appropriate.

The Starbase is a little bit different in that that program, which our young men and women in the area of Math and Science — and also at-risk — go once a week for five weeks to a program in which — assists them in gaining those skills in Math and Science and also becoming a productive citizen. We have a little over \$13 million in that program.

I strongly support both of those. In Louisiana, when I traveled there as the chief of the Naval Reserve, I visited the ChalleNGe people on site. And I saw those young men and women becoming better, productive citizens.

But I think part of the challenge will be for the states to be able to make sure their budgets support their share of it.

BEN NELSON: And if they fail to support, through their budgets, does that mean the demise of the program?

HALL: We try to help them. They have to make that judgment call. And there are a couple of ways you could do that and we have recently talked to a couple of states. You might scope down the amount of children in the program and be able to accomplish it within the funding that you have left.

What I think would be a mistake would be to cancel the program because these young men and women need that example. We need to help them be productive citizens. But the only way is when the funds — do you scope it down and have less people or do you make that tough decision to not support it? I hope we keep those programs going.

BEN NELSON: And Secretary Hall, yesterday I heard that top federal officials have asked many of the 50 states to deploy the National Guard or some state police — or state police programs, where appropriate, to protect sensitive sites across the nation from possible attack.

If the National Guard is deployed for this homeland security mission, do you know what the status of the person of — will be for the personnel purposes?

HALL: I read the same thing and I know Secretary Ridge talked to all of the governors by — I understand, by a conference call. I know they have developed an extensive list of the different facilities that need to be looked at, both federal and state — critical infrastructure throughout the country — and to develop the plan by which we protect those.

Of course the military force is not a first responder — DOD is not. The other agencies are. We are in support of that. So I think there is adequate flexibility within Title 10, Title 32 or state active duty, using any of those three that is appropriate, determined by the governor, in consultation with federal authorities to get the people on scene from DOD that you need to support the first responders.

So I think there is flexibility within those three provisions, Senator, to handle what we need. And we are cooperating in that review.

BEN NELSON: Now, in that regard, a number of the states have indicated that they don't have the funds to be able to activate the Guard. If a state doesn't do it because of the lack of money, is there the possibility that the federal government would be proposing to reimburse the states for any call to active duty?

HALL: I guess I can only go back to the...

BEN NELSON: (inaudible) I should say.

HALL: ... — go back to the past — what has happened. And I wasn't during the time — it's my understanding that certainly if it is determined to be a requirement by which we need those troops and if it is determined that the appropriate way is to take federal funds to reimburse them to go meet that mission, then I think that will be done.

But I think that's a consultation between the state governor — between the federal government and looking at how we best get them there to do the job. And there are — there are provisions and I think that will work.

BEN NELSON: So you do believe that the federal government could step to the — up to the plate in those situations. Would there be a situation where the federal government might refuse to?

HALL: I couldn't use any conjecture on that, sir. I just — I think the provisions are there and I have confidence that we'll do what's called for to protect that critical infrastructure.

BEN NELSON: OK.

And finally, Mr. Hollingsworth, in June of 2002, the GAO reported the department — the DOD does not have complete information on civilian employees — employers of the Guard and Reserve members and this lack of information limits the ability of the department to reach out to some of these employers to inform them of their rights and obligations and to help litigate the temporary loss of employees who are mobilized.

And the GAO reported that the department believes that the privacy act prevents them from requiring members of the Reserve components to provide this information.

The GAO also recommended that the department reexamine the provisions of the privacy act and determine whether requiring reservists to report information about their civilian employers is consistent with the act.

Now, based on your dealings with the service members, as well as your dealings with employers, as well, can you support a requirement that reservists provide information to the Department of Defense on their civilian employment so that — if there is an exception, as required, as part of the — part of the privacy act or if it's determine that an amendment is not necessary to require that?

HOLLINGSWORTH: Sir, I've got another good news story. Since that GAO report has been out, Secretary Hall and his staff have been working real diligently with Dr. Chu to bring that to fruition. And we're there. We have — we have gotten authority to do that. Now we're in the process of establishing the technical ability to capture that data. And we hope in — I think it's by the first of June or so we should start being able to have our ADP systems in place to make this happen. So that is a great story and that's a tremendous help to us, in the SGR, sir.

HALL: I might comment on that — in fact, we will, in June. And part of our problem — and we could ask questions for various sources. How many of your people in your Reserve are first responders? How many of them are firemen or policemen? Because we want to know that — we can't tell now because we've had no requirement for you, as a guardsman or reservist to tell us your occupation and your employer.

What we intend to do is to make sure the information is minimal — it protects the privacy rights and only collects what we need to know so that we can tell who your employer is to make judgments on things like are we mobilizing lots of firemen and policemen — we have no way. We'll start collecting that in June.

BEN NELSON: Thank you — both of you gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAMBLISS: Secretary Hall, the youth ChalleNGe program in my state is one of the most important programs I think has ever been implemented. And I commend the National Guard on a regular basis for putting that program in place.

And I've spoken to one of the graduation classes. And my favorite story about them is the day that I happened to be there on a Friday afternoon when they were allowing the kids to go home. A gentleman came up to me after I spoke to the whole group with parents in attention who were waiting on their kids to take them home for the weekend — a gentleman in overalls came up to me with tears in his eyes. And he said, "Congressman," he said, "I just want you to know were it not for this program, my son would be dead." And boy, you talk about something getting to you — that was about as powerful as it gets. And he meant it and I knew he meant it. And that's how important that program is.

Secretary Hall, active duty physicians, nurses and other health care providers receive significant compensation through series of special medical pays. Many of these special pays require a service commitment, therefore, Guard and Reserve health care professionals are not eligible for these pays. I understand that one of the categories of reservists with the greatest income loss when activated are the health care professionals.

Is the department considering any type of medical special pay authorities to address the significant gap between active and Reserve health care providers?

HALL: We are going to be examining that question in the — in the pay and compensation study that the department is undertaking. We hope to complete that by August. And we — it's going to be a very broad look.

And one of the things that we have to examine in recruiting, retention and use of our medical professionals, where we have many shortages, or to factor — are bonuses or incentive pay and others appropriate? And we're going to look at that also, vis-a-vis from the Reserve to the active. And that will be examined in that overall pay and compensation study for Guard and Reserve. Hope to complete that by August and report the results to you and others.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

Medical and dental readiness is the key to having deployable personnel. And a significant problem arose during the Gulf War when active service members were not dental ready. This cause delays in the service members' deployment until dental issues were resolved — costly alternatives for DOD to provide the appropriate dental response and often dramatic measures to correct problems that, under other circumstances, could have been handled with less severe treatment.

Mr. Secretary, based on the experience gained during the Gulf War, what steps have been taken to ensure that dental readiness is not a problem this time? And what steps still remain to be resolved?

HALL: You hit upon it — dental readiness is much bigger than the — just the medical end, although it's all medical.

And based upon the Gulf War, a lot of attention has been given to the issue, but it still probably remains the number one.

And one of the issues that we have looked at is when are the Guardsmen and Reservists available to get dental care? And one of the initiatives is to provide a low-cost dental insurance for our Guardsmen and Reservists. It's a self-pay, but I think it's — if we're not right, we'll get back to you — \$8.35 a month. And through this dental plan, it affords them the opportunity to buy that insurance to get themselves dentally ready.

Now that's only a portion of it. The second is how can we work on those young men and women during times — can it only be when they're on active duty? And we're examining the rules about being able to — as I've often said — not to make light of it — drill them while they're on drill? So when they're drilling, can we provide our dentists to work on them? And — because that would be very helpful.

So we're examining a number of those alternatives, all with the goal of recognizing it's our, probably, number one problem in seeing how we are better in this mobilization than we were. But I don't think the better is quite good enough. And those initiatives we'll look at to continue attacking the problem.

CHAMBLISS: Ben, do you have anything?

BEN NELSON: Just one more.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

BEN NELSON: We've all heard stories of Reservists who have experienced financial difficulty in being called up. There have been stories in the paper and just recently there was one in a television program about the challenges that are there where — what will happen to a family if it loses 60 percent of its income with 100 percent of its expenses continuing. Most families can't withstand that kind of a shock to their personal economy. And, obviously, it does create quite a — quite a challenge in the event of mobilization.

Do you have any thoughts on what we might do in terms of dealing with that kind of a challenge?

HALL: I have some and then ask Mr. Hollingsworth to talk to you a little bit about what some of our employers and other people are doing.

It's a problem which you hear a lot about. And what we are attempting to do is get our arms around the truth because I read the same reports. We go out — about Guardsmen and Reservists that are losing tremendous amounts of money, so we have attempted to come at it as analytically as we can.

We have had a couple of surveys — and I caution to say one of them was in 2000, one of them was in 2002. They were a lower amount of database than we wanted, but we think they are statistically relevant. And they generally show that about one-third of our Guardsmen and Reservists lose money when they go on active duty. About two-thirds, however, hold themselves even or actually gain. And when I was here before, I reviewed for your state some of the wages. And in some case — and I hate to say it because I think our teachers are underpaid throughout the country in all of our states — and I took a look at your state, Mr. Chairman, also — and many of our Guardsmen and Reservists would almost double their pay from being a teacher if they are an officer when they go on active duty.

So we believe the two studies statistically validate each other that about one-third lose some sort of pay. And, of course, we would rather not anyone, but many of our companies have stepped up to the plate — and I might ask Mr. Hollingsworth to tell you what is being done privately across the board — what is being done by some of the states that are picking up the difference in the pay.

HOLLINGSWORTH: Yes, sir.

Again, a great news story and it just makes me beam with pride in what our employers are doing as they step up to the plate and support our young men and young women across the country.

Yes — I've got — I've got a list here of about — this one doesn't have all of them — we've got about 300 lists — and we — lists are kind of strange things around this town because you've got to be careful with getting lists because you don't want to have some people not wanting their name on the list. But — so — but we're trying to take the people that really care about our Guard and Reservists and make them aware of just how proud we are of them.

In many cases — we've done surveys and we — as we touch people every day in the — in the — they're both the public and the private sector, we continue to learn about what they are doing to support the Guard and Reserve.

I just heard one case that came out of a company that covers six states in New England. And these folks — not only if you're in the Guard and Reserve and belong to that company and — they're going to provide the differential (ph) in salary. They're going to continue the medical benefits and they're going to form — or they have formed family support programs so that if their yards need mowing — if their children need to be going to the doctor and so forth they can do babysitting. There is really incredible things being done out there.

But these people went one step beyond. They say, "If you have a spouse that's in the Guard and Reserve and you've been mobilized, we'll give you an opportunity — without vacation time — we'll buy you a ticket to wherever that person is, if he's in the United States, and let you go visit him or her."

And so those are the kind of things people are stepping up to the plate to do. And it's a really exciting time to be a part of this because the employers really are stepping up to the plate. And I would encourage Congress to just continue to acknowledge what our folks are doing — that's both in the private and the public sector.

You know, we have young towns — small townships that are really hurting because the financial situation that they may be in, from a tax base perspective. But they're still — when their folks are mobilized out of their townships, they're meeting their salary differential, continuing their medical benefits. It's a great news story, sir.

HALL: The other thing — if I just might — we also want to make sure — and it is a complex problem — but our young men and women that are mobilized in the foxhole are earning the very same as their active duty people right along side of them. So we have to be careful to balance all of the factors so that each and every E-5 Reserve or active are earning the very same salary — and we provide that. The problem is not as easy to say, but it's also something you have to consider.

BEN NELSON: Is there any idea or a ballpark estimate of how many people are — and what percentage of their income they are losing? If you're losing only slightly — part of your income, that's one thing, but if — the story the other evening of lost 60 percent of — you may not have as many suffering the hardship, but you could have a few suffering a great hardship. I wonder if there's any way of determining what hardship is being suffered and by how many.

HALL: We haven't had the fidelity that we need within our systems. That's one reason we need an employer-based system so we can accurately slice that and cut that and take it. But generally, our experience tells us that in the — in certain fields it — the amount is — a vast amount is not being realized in the — in the firemen and policemen and other skills. In doctors — perhaps lawyers and some of the others information technology specialists that are very high earning, I think...

(CROSSTALK)

BEN NELSON: ... solo practice with a — with an office full of backup personnel, they would be more detrimentally hurt, as would others if they had to give up a practice.

HALL: I think that's where you see it. And that's where the larger differentials — and we need to, frankly, do a better job of cutting it the way you indicated and getting the exact ground truth on it. It's hard to come at. But I suspect it's in the ones that were typically very high wage earners, perhaps physicians and then they would suffer a bit more.

BEN NELSON: And I suspect you're not trying to figure out a way for those who are actually earning more to give it back?

HALL: Well, we have seen no one willing to do an income distribution so far within that 66 percent.

BEN NELSON: Distributions like that happen in government, not out there. Yes.

HOLLINGSWORTH: Sir, I've talked to many Guard and Reservists as I travel around the country. They say, "Yes, we're suffering hardships, but we know it's important for our country." And they're — you know, they're not in the large part. They're silent. They're doing what's fundamentally right because they know that when they signed up to stay in the Guard and Reserve that there is an obligation to their country's defense there that they are willing to accept. And they know that there is a risk involved and that makes you even prouder to be an American, to see what they are doing.

BEN NELSON: Well, and I think it's important for the record to indicate that we are not being under siege be report after report by any of the Reservists or their families about the situation. They will suffer silently because of their sacrifice and their commitment to their country.

It's because of that that I think it's important we bring it up. They are certainly not going to bring it up or raise the issue significantly. But I think it is important that we make sure we are doing everything we can to deal with that issue.

I think it's also important, as you — as you would agree, to the future of the Reserve or Guard components, because of the fact that you're going to lose a solo practice or you're going to lose a great deal of money and risk financial challenges, you may decide that you can't be a part of the process.

HALL: I think clearly for recruiting and retention for the future, we're all going to be competing for a smaller demographic pool of people. We are competing against business and we've got to think through this thing in a total pay and compensation for the future. As we compete for that smaller base of manpower to retain and recruit people, we are going to have to consider that. And that's our commitment in looking at this in a very broad-based compensation and pay for all of the Guardsmen and Reservists.

BEN NELSON: Well, thank you again.

CHAMBLISS: Secretary Hall, just one other question that I would just like to get you to comment on and that is the proposed merger of the military personnel accounts — the Guard and Reserve — with the active force. Obviously, this is generated by our controversy inside of Congress and outside of Congress. And I would appreciate any comment you would like to make on this proposal.

HALL: Well, certainly what Congress will decide on ultimately will be what we will do on it.

I think if I can best characterize the management initiative — and it — and it does parallel my experience when I commanded the Reserve and then my other military billets — and that was that any commander, businessman or anyone would like to have flexibility within their accounts. You would like to have control of all of the different kinds of pots — be able to apply those as you best see fit — and the flexibility.

The department feels that there would be more flexibility to — within — combining the Guard, Reserve, active duty accounts to be able to move money between active to Guard or Reserve or vice versa, based upon the need. And it could move either way.

There will still maintain the visibility by appropriation, however, so that it could be viewed by the department, myself and you to see if, in fact, a balance is being maintained. But I think it is certainly, from Secretary Rumsfeld's position — he would like more flexibility in all of his accounts to be able to manage the money in a more flexible way.

That is behind it. There's a lot of concern on behalf of associations — Guardsmen and Reservists — will this mean migration of large amounts of money from Reserve accounts over to the active side. And I don't see that. And I think should those kinds of things occur, it would be incumbent on all of us to explain why, to provide visibility on that and to make sure the right thing is being done.

But we have no indication that this system would not provide more flexibility and would not work at this point. I think we have to see.

BEN NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I might have one follow-up question to that.

CHAMBLISS: Sure.

BEN NELSON: In terms of having the flexibility here, would this still protect the accounts as it might relate to the availability of the Guard at the local level to deal with emergencies? Or will I be getting a call from the Nebraska Adjutant General saying that, "I'd like to help my governor. I'd like to help the people in the state of Nebraska, but they pulled the money out of my account. It's over in another account and I can't mobilize to deal with an emergency,"?

HALL: I would hope you wouldn't get that call. And the panel that follows us might be the first one to get that.

It would — certainly would not affect the state funds by — which the governor could use. I do not think it would affect the overall pot of money available in federal funds to support either Title 32 or Title 10 requirements. And I don't think that's at all the intent of it. It's just more one of flexibility.

BEN NELSON: Oh, I understand it wouldn't be the intent. I just wanted to make sure...

HALL: Sure.

BEN NELSON: ... it wasn't the unintended consequence.

HALL: I hope you don't get that call, sir.

BEN NELSON: All right. Thank you.

CHAMBLISS: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your testimony today. We appreciate you being here.

And I would now like to ask our second panel to come forward — Major General Raymond Rees, acting chief, National Guard Bureau; Lieutenant General Daniel James, director, Air National Guard; and Lieutenant General Roger Schultz, director, Army National Guard.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today and we would look forward to any opening statements you have to make.

And, General Schultz, we'll start with you.

SCHULTZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, if I could, I'd like to introduce the senior enlisted soldier in the Army National Guard, Command Sergeant Mr. Frank Lever (ph). He's with us today. He looks after our soldiers in the field and I just wanted you to know, Mr. Chairman, I'm honored to serve with that soldier.

Mr. Chairman, today we have over 80,000 members of the Army National Guard in a partial mobilized status. That's in addition to the other deployments that we have around the world. We've already discharged over 20,000 members from previous years' mobilization duty. So we've had over a third of the Army Guard on some duty status since September attacks — September 11 attacks just a couple of years ago.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your interest in looking after our team in the field. Today, in a special way, it's not just our soldiers, that's our families and our employers, as well.

Trained and ready is the theme that we carry throughout our work and, Mr. Chairman, with your support and members of the committee's support, that's exactly what we have.

Mr. Chairman, I am honored to represent their interests here today.

Thank you.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

General Rees?

REES: Sir — Mr. Chairman, I'm grateful to be here and have this opportunity to talk about the Guard and pleased to be here with both the director of the Army Guard, General Schultz, and the director of the Air Guard, General James, and their senior enlisted non-commissioned officers that are here with us.

I want to also thank you very much for your support and this committee's support. We were — the magnificent effort that's going on in the Guard and Reserve right now all across the globe couldn't have been done without the help that's been given to us over the years.

I have prepared a written statement that provides detail and would offer that for the record. I just want to take a moment here to highlight some key points.

Perhaps more than at any time in modern American history both the Army and the Air National Guard have been responding to the call of America. Even prior to the events of September 11, 2001, the Guard was performing in unprecedented numbers in support of military operations worldwide and military support to civil authorities at home. Since that time, the numbers have gone even higher. The Guard is well suited to be flexible and responsive in its ability to provide personnel to both combatant commanders and governors in the various duty statuses available to meet each need.

My written testimony details these duty statuses and the means in which they can be employed. And the success in which these duty statuses have been used I believe are well documented. And I would also add that at least one of them in Title 32 U.S. Code in which National Guardsmen are under the command and control of the governor, but paid for with federal funds, is a template that we believe should be considered for other missions as they relate directly to homeland defense.

I would like to also highlight some success stories of our National Guard. While it is true that both the Army and the Air National Guardsmen that are being called away from careers and families for extended periods — that the members are out there and are proud to serve. They're given — a large number of Guardsmen that are called to duty, as General Schultz

just mentioned — 80,000 plus of the Army National Guard and the — nearly 17,000 Air National Guard are mobilized.

We have individuals in other statuses at this moment that, when we look at the complete picture, there are over 140,000 National Guardsmen that are involved in one way or another in — either in the Gulf, someplace around the globe or in the domestic service.

They train for their missions. They are ready, willing and able to perform these missions when called upon to do so.

I am sure that General Schultz, myself and General James can give you many anecdotes about meeting with the troops in the field. But General James can give you even more detail because of a mobilization survey that was just conducted by his organization.

Importantly, in that survey, 89 percent of the Air National Guardsmen sat — or indicated satisfaction with their amount of time in uniform. And 82 percent indicated that they intend to stay in the Air National Guard.

When asked what would increase their likelihood of staying, the number one incentive was increased pay and benefits. This highlights that our Guardsmen are proud of what they do and like doing it and it's pay and parity issues that remain to be resolved.

My written testimony also addresses other issues, such as disparity and benefits of National Guardsmen serving under Title 32 who are not protected under the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act.

I would also like to mention that the increased use of the Guard has also intensified our need for more full-time manning. That's a very big issue for us across the board.

The fight against terrorism and the protection of our homeland will be a protracted effort. Many policy experts, reports and studies have advocated an expanded role for the National Guard in homeland defense. We like to think that we've been doing this since 1636 and we will continue to do so. Our mission under the Constitution is to repel invasion, suppress insurrection and execute the laws of the Union. And certainly under both Title 10 and Title 32 our mission there is to be an integral part of the first line of defense of this nation.

The reality is that the National Guard is an integral part of the Army and the Air Force total mission capability and that role is vital to the nation.

The Guard girdle (ph) is going to work with the states, with the Northern Command, with the services, with the new assistant secretary of homeland defense and so on to identify whatever additional homeland defense capabilities are needed. And we plan to consolidate and validate the stated requirements and help find solutions.

In this capacity, the National Guard Bureau, we believe, can serve as a very useful channel of communications to all of those entities that I have mentioned, as well as be the channel of communication that we are traditionally seen as with the Department of the Air Force, Department of the Army and our role as a reserve of those services.

The men and women of the Army and the Air National Guard are well engaged in every aspect of our national response to the threats facing our country. They are making significant sacrifices. They are enthusiastic about serving and do so with pride and determined confidence. They prove every day that when America needs the Guard, the Guard is there.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify and I stand ready to take your questions, sir.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

General James?

JAMES: Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. And before I get into my remarks, I also would like to introduce the command chief master sergeant at the Air National Guard — Chief Master Sergeant Bal Benton (ph), who is in attendance here today.

Master Sergeant Benton (ph) serves as my senior enlisted adviser and my link between the Air National Guard directorate and the enlisted airmen in the field and does so very, very well.

As we enter yet another phase of challenging times for our nation, your Air National Guard is more involved in the global operations on the defense of this nation at any time since the Korean War. As General Rees pointed out, there are tens of thousands of airmen around the globe this afternoon serving their country very well.

Our new motto in the Air National Guard is Ready, Reliable and Relevant and it is, perhaps, an understatement of the great things our men and women are doing in service of our nation. We have a quite a story to tell and I am very proud to be the conduit of that story on behalf of over 110,000 — excuse me — 109,000 patriots that comprise your Air National Guard today.

The close relationships we have maintained with our members, their families and their employers are key to the Air National Guard's accessibility and reliability during the global war on terrorism.

We would like to thank the Congress for recently passing two pieces of legislation that will significantly aid the Air National Guard's future recruiting and retention efforts — significantly allowing us to increase the prior service session bonus from \$5,000 to \$8,000 and your initiative to increase the eligibility period for the Montgomery GI Bill benefits from 10 to 14 years. We believe that both of these programs will pay the Air National Guard and — the Air National Guard, in general, substantial dividends in the years to come.

We're striving to retain the core of the Air National Guard, our midterm airmen. Those are those members who are serving between six and the 12-year point. By doing so, we will be able to substantially mitigate pressures on our training pipeline caused by the projected surge in non-prior service members. Our retention is the lowest in the mid-career airmen category. Currently our reenlistment bonus for critical specialties is capped at \$5,000. We believe a more appropriate limit would be \$10,000. This would help us sustain our readiness posture for rapid mobilization and deployment required by today's operations tempo.

While we strive to ensure parity of pay and benefits for all of our members, with deployments at historically high levels, we must also keep a watchful eye over the families they leave behind. The post-9/11 challenges and operations tempo of the Air National Guard not only increased our reliance on our people, but ultimately placed increased pressures on families. We continue to recognize the importance of the family as the key tenant of readiness and retention. Family support is a readiness issue, and we address it accordingly. We have been successful in improving family support because you have given us the necessary resources to fund a full-time contracted family readiness position at each wing and combat readiness training center.

Our employers are also key — a key component of our ability to put the right person in the right place at the right time to support our national security objectives. The Air National Guard could not function without the support of America's employers. With the increased utilization of Reserve component personnel, employers are being impacted now more than ever.

In closing, we do not know what the future holds for our dedicated men and women. We do know that they have a proven track record of rising to every challenge and answering every call. We are busier than ever and we are needed now, more than ever. And we most certainly need the equipment and resources to perform our mission, however, our most precious resource remains our people.

We are confident that working with you, we will remain a premiere military organization, serving in the communities throughout this land, protecting America at home and abroad.

I thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I look forward to working with you and to answering your questions.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

And to both of your sergeant majors, thank you all very much for being here and for the great work you all do for our country. We know that just like with the active force, you're the heart and soul of the Guard and Reserve and we thank you for your service to our country.

And, gentlemen, I'll have to tell you, I was in Bosnia a couple of years ago when the Georgia National Guard was over there doing their tour of duty. And I have been to Guantanamo several times and we have several Guard units on active duty down there from all over the country. And, obviously, I was particularly interested in what was happening with our Georgia folks. And morale has always been high. They do a great job. They are there to do a job which they know they hired on to do. And you're doing a great job in preparing those young men and women to serve their country when they are called on.

General Schultz, as you know, Congress has taken the initiative in the last three years to provide funding and authorization for additional full-time support personnel, both officer and enlisted, in the Army National Guard and

Reserve units. Consistent with an agreed-on plan within the Army, this additional manpower is intended to improve the readiness of National Guard and Reserve units. How are these additional full-time support personnel being used? How do they contribute to unit readiness?

SCHULTZ: Mr. Chairman, the voucher that I signed instructing the adjutant general on how to distribute these now new soldiers authorized basically says this — the priority for assigning these soldiers are to deploying units. So I'm coaching an adjutant general to put the soldiers in the right places. I'm following the intent of what I believe the Congress has stated to me and that is put the soldiers in the field, and our instructions in the manpower vouchers I send to states says just exactly that.

CHAMBLISS: General James, back in January, I guess it was, of 2001 — February maybe — we had an order that came from the Pentagon to move the B-1s out of the 116th wing at Robins. You heard my comments, I hope, earlier about the integration of the Guard and the active force on JSTARS. And from what I see on the ground, that is working extremely well.

Would you give me the Guard perspective on how you think that particular integration is working?

JAMES: Well, certainly I agree that it is working very well, especially since it is a landmark initiative. This is the first time that the Air National Guard and the active component have combined in what we call the blended unit, as you described it earlier. And it has been successful.

We have had to coordinate another — a number of different issues because it is a first time, but, in fact, I find the morale was very high when I visited. I had a town hall meeting with them. Both the active and the Guard folks are getting used to working together. They have had different working routines before, the Guard, of course, being predominantly a traditional part-time force. But the active part of the Guard's force and the active component are working very well to solve any challenges that come up.

There is one issue that remains on the table and I think you are familiar with that and that is the ability of a Guard commander, placed in command of an active duty airmen, to be able to give lawful orders and hold accountable, under the UCMJ — if he goes on Title 10, he can do that, but once he goes into the Title 10 status, then he loses his ability to do the same thing under the Title 32 status, which is many of his Guards — airmen are operating under. So that still needs to be addressed and it will take some change in the law — in the statute.

However, the other issues that we look at on the daily basis — the funding, who the airplanes will belong to, contracted logistical maintenance and all those issues we are working with and we solve them just one at a time, as they come up.

It is a success story and the secretary, I will tell you, is fully committed to that continuing to be successful and maybe be a blueprint for the future for some of the other organizations we are going to have to look at combining in the future.

CHAMBLISS: Yes. I think without question it will be and we are working that issue on making sure that command and control is properly — the power for command and control is there.

General Rees, successful recruiting for your service I know is a key responsibility. And, as you well know, it's a mission you can't be complacent about. With a downsized active duty force, stop loss and a demanding operations tempo, this challenge is only getting harder for you all, as well as for the active force, I know.

What are your biggest concerns about your ability to successfully recruit qualified personnel? And, if you will, tell us some of your plans for advertising that you have.

REES: Mr. Chairman, we have a very vigorous program out there and I'm going to have to defer to both of the directors, here, to get into the details of this. But we are continuing to be very sensitive to what we — is termed "the propensity for enlisting" — "propensity for service." We're doing a lot of market research. We are working hard to make sure that the story of the Guard is out there and in front of everyone as to what the benefits are for service in the Guard. And certainly with the current world events, we are getting a lot of additional help from the media. I think there is — despite some of the stories of hardships, there are also a lot of stories here that have to do with patriotism and pride in service.

And as far as the specific issues about advertising, let me turn to General Schultz.

SCHULTZ: Mr. Chairman, but for a good relationship with state broadcasting associations, I mean, that's the team that really holds together our advertising account across the nation.

So our return on the investment is time and again beyond what we invest in those accounts across the country. So we have an agreement of sorts that they look after, kind of, the Guard image — the Guard marketing for a whole lot more value than we currently send them in terms of an investment. So that's how the advertising works. And it's a success story, to be sure.

Mr. Chairman, today the Army Guard is short of our programmed end strength — not a crisis, but I want you to know I am concerned. We have assembled all the recruiters across the Guard today in a single meeting and we're talking now about — let's make certain here that we're focused toward our target of 350,000 members. I'm short 2,800 members against our program strength.

Couple of points I think have caused that condition — one, we spent a certain amount of time getting units ready on very shortened mobilization. Some of our recruiters helped us do that. Some of our recruiters also helped with one of the tasks in their job description — recruiter job description — is to look after families. So in this process, we lost focus on production. So if you look about the Army Guard's strength today, our retention really is at or near the target or the program figures, production is where we need to dial the attention. And we will meet our 30 September target of 350,000 soldiers, without a doubt we will do it. But it requires attention — requires states' attention — adjutant generals and others to help get there.

REES: Sir — Mr. Chairman, there is also, I think, an advertising issue in the Air National Guard of significance here. Several years ago the Air Guard did not advertise at all. But they have done a magnificent job and I think there is some additional information here from General James.

JAMES: Thank you.

Just very briefly, we have been very fortunate to make our end strength. As a matter of fact, we're over end strength right now of — and I would like to say that it's all due to the recruiting and retention efforts of all of our commanders and our recruiting force. But there are a couple of other factors that impact that, of course — the stop loss that the Air Force put in place and, of course, a somewhat weaker economy than many people would like to see.

However, we were very fortunate in a way in that we could make our end strength and make our recruiting goals. As a matter of fact, we have not missed our recruiting goals in the — in the last five of the last six years. But we see a need to, as I said, focus on the midterm airmen from the six to 12-year group.

But we are, in fact — before we did public service announcements and those kinds of things. And because of plus-up, generally from the Congress and sometimes additional funding — funds that are made available to us from the active component, we have decided to do some more advertising. We have purchased national radio spots for eight weeks — two per week — and we've purchased paid ads in all of our base papers and so forth.

We have looked at using the same advertiser that the Air Force uses and purchase nationwide pay TV of \$8.7 million and increased — purchase nationwide paid radio of up to \$5 million.

CHAMBLISS: Good.

Senator Nelson?

BEN NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Now, you all heard my question earlier about the combining of the active and Reserve pay accounts into a single appropriation with separate budget activities. And the concern that I raised is more specifically directed to you.

Was the National Guard Bureau given a meaningful opportunity to provide input on this policy change?

REES: Senator Nelson, in this particular instance, we found out about this particular change after the fact. And we were not part of the process.

BEN NELSON: Well, then let me ask it this way — would the concern that I raised regarding the ability of the Guard to be able to deal with local matters of — and emergencies as part of the responsibilities of the adjutant general to deal with local issues — would those — would those activities be adversely affected?

REES: Senator Nelson, if they were dealt with as state active duty, clearly those would be done with state funds out of the state general treasury and would not be impacted by this.

BEN NELSON: Well — but there are some funds that also deal with — at the federal level that assist the state with some of those obligations so that there are — some are shared — a shared liability, if you will — shared responsibility. What about that — or do you — or do you know?

REES: The best way that I think I can answer this, Senator, is that in the past I think we have had a successful relationship with the states in dealing with the fiscal issues that have come up and particularly meeting all of our readiness requirements. So we have a system we believe works.

BEN NELSON: Now — well, then, dealing strictly with the federal level, without regard to state funds or state requirements, with respect to emergencies, but at the federal level, if this proposal were in effect today, can you determine who would stand to gain? Would it be the National Guard or the active component?

REES: Senator, I could — I don't believe I could even speculate on that. We're in — we're in a situation where it has been described as creating more flexibility and that would appear, from the larger DOD perspective, to be — to deliver more flexibility.

BEN NELSON: Well, I'm all in favor of flexibility, I just always want to know what consequences flow from flexibility.

You have answered my question. I understand. I don't — won't put the other two of you through the agony.

(LAUGHTER)

Thank you very much, General Rees.

BEN NELSON: That takes care of my questions, Mr. Chairman.

CHAMBLISS: All right, gentlemen, we will put your full statement in the record. We thank you very much for being here. Thank you for your service to our country.

REES: Thank you.

SCHULTZ: Thank you.

CHAMBLISS: Our next panel is Lieutenant General James Helmley, chief of the Army Reserve; Vice Admiral John B. Totushek...

And I hope I'm saying that right, Admiral.

... chief, Naval Reserve; Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy, commander, Marine Forces Reserve; and Major General John J. Batbie, Jr., vice chief of the Air Force Reserve.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here.

And we welcome these representatives of our Reserve components.

And before I introduce, once again, these gentlemen to — that are appearing on this panel, let me just say, General Batbie, that I just learned about General Sharid's (ph) health problems yesterday. And I am sorry Jimmy couldn't be with us today. And please, when you get back, let him know that he is in our thoughts and our prayers and we wish him a very speedy recovery. I understand he's up and about some, but we will sure keep him in our prayers.

And I promise you that it will not be held against you that you are a close friend of Congressman Steve Buyer (ph).

(LAUGHTER)

I will not let that enter into our thought process here.

Gentlemen, we are glad to have you here, today. We look forward to your statements and your answering questions.

And General Helmley, we will start with you.

HELMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Nelson and members of this distinguished subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity and the privilege and, indeed, the honor to testify on behalf of the soldiers, civilian employees and family members of the United States Army Reserve.

I previously submitted a written statement and I would respectfully request that that be entered into the record.

CHAMBLISS: Certainly.

HELMLEY: I am accompanied today by Command Sergeant Major Michelle Jones, the other half of the command team for the United States Army Reserve, who represents our enlisted soldiers. And I will be happy to take your questions at the end of my opening statement.

Currently, over 69,000 Army Reserve soldiers are mobilized, serving courageously, skillfully and proudly around the world. These modern day patriots willingly answered the call to duty as part of a responsive and relevant force, the world's greatest ground combat force — the United States Army.

This committee, through its dedicated support to the men and women in the Army Reserve, has played a major role in maintaining the relevance and strengthening the readiness of the Army Reserve. Your concern for our people, our most precious resource, who dedicate a significant part of their life to defending our nation, in addition to honoring commitments to employers and families, is appreciated and highly respected.

Thank you for that.

Historically, our nation and its military have placed a heavy reliance on its Reserve components as a force in reserve. During the Cold War, the Army Reserve, as well as the Army's active component and, indeed, the components of the armed services — other armed services was not used as heavily as we have experienced in the last decade. In Desert Shield, Desert Storm, the Army Reserve was mobilized heavily — 84,000 soldiers answered the call to duty and performed with distinction and then demobilized and returned home. The success of that operation, to include the use of the nation's Reserve components, became a much forgotten issue.

Now, however, the Army Reserve has been in a continuous state of mobilization since December of 1995. Since 1996, the average number of Army Reserve soldiers mobilized has exceeded 9,200 per annum. Our soldiers are part of the rotational forces keeping the peace in Eastern Europe by providing ongoing capabilities in Bosnia and Kosovo. It was not a noticeable challenge to mobilize for Bosnia and Kosovo because the requirement was predictable, small in number and stable. While the process we used was not perfect, we were able to accomplish our mission of providing trained units and qualified persons without stress.

On September the 11th, the changing security environment that existed in the remainder of the world came rapidly home. The very nature of this war — long duration, fluid and volatile — dictates that major changes are required to practices, procedures and policies related to how we organize men, train, mobilize and use our Army Reserve.

We are discovering that the processes and policies in place were designed for a very different time and a very different type of war than we are engaged in today. As a result, we have been challenged.

HELMLEY: Further, many have questioned our ability to respond early in a contingency operation to sustain mobilization and still continue to attract and retain quality young men and women, such as the ones who populate our force today.

There is an ongoing debate concerning the wisdom of reliance on the nation's Reserve components for operations of a smaller scale and early reliance in the opening phases of a larger scale contingency operation. Today, 33 percent of your Army Reserve strength is mobilized, but raw troop strength numbers are not an accurate indication. There are pockets within that force of much greater stress.

The Army Reserve has been able to meet the challenges to date, but clearly our structure requires change to meet the demands for capabilities that the Army Reserve excels in. We will do this. While changing industrial age mobilization and personnel assignment policies is necessary, restructuring our force so that we can implement predictable and sustainable rotations based upon depth and capability is also necessary.

We acknowledge that there is no time out from war or preparation from war to make these changes. Confronting these dual challenges, transforming while at war, is a very necessity, given the gravity of the world situation as it exists today. The accepted sacrifice of our people demonstrated by their willingness to serve the nation when asked to do so, deserves our courage to make rotation policies more predictable, to restructure our force, to change and refine our mobilization, training and compensation policies and processes.

The Army Reserve is engaged in developing plans to attack each of these issues.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions that you have.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you, General.

Admiral?

TOTUSHEK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Nelson.

It's a real pleasure for me, also, to be here today to talk to you just for a few minutes about the Naval Reserve force. I, too, have submitted a written statement and I would like that put into the record.

I would like to, instead of my usual summary of the accomplishments and the challenges that the Naval Reserve has had over the last few years, just talk to you about three myths that I think are out there. And I think they apply to all the Reserve components.

The first myth that's becoming popular around town is the fact — is the idea that we're overused. The Naval Reserve force, like the Army Reserve and the rest of the components, has been tasked over the last few years, but I would tell you that the opposite is true. The people that are being used are happy being used. They feel like they are contributing to the country and they know that what they are doing is important.

My attrition in the Naval Reserve force runs around 28 percent at the present time. The people that have been mobilized attrition is less than half of that. So I think that data kind of backs up the statement that the people are proud of what they are doing and they feel that they're doing something important when they are serving the country, even if they're asked to do it once or twice in their lifetime.

The second myth is that we should not put 100 percent of any capability in any one of the components. In the Naval Reserve, I think we've got the poster child for a successful program that we have been able to provide Navy 100 percent of the capability. And that's the — our logistics airlift — airplanes that provide inter-theater airlift for a commander that is in a theater of such a CINC as (ph) NAVJF (ph) or our NAVCENT folks. Those are — all of those airplanes are flown by naval Reservists. They are all owned by the Naval Reserve and through the help of the Congress, we have been able to upgrade some of those airplanes to the new C-40s, which is a 737 variant.

We do that without even having to mobilize them in great numbers — even with the taskings that we have over in the Middle East today, we are able to provide that kind of service over there day in and day out, primarily using people that are on two-week deps or even longer rotations. We do have one squadron mobilized and yet we're able to provide it not only in Europe and in the Middle East, but also in Japan at the same time — in the Pacific.

The third is that it takes us too long to mobilize. General Helmley referred to the fact that we have outdated processes and the problem, oftentimes, is that the mobilization clock seems to start when the requirement is put in, as far as the combatant commander is concerned. But it sits and goes through several loopholes inside of the organization in the Department of Defense before it gets down to the Reserves to actually mobilize their people.

Once we get the requirement, we are able to turn people on in very short order — three days to a week is our nominal processing time.

So I just want to highlight those three myths I think that are out there. And we can talk about them more if you'd like to. But I think those things have gotten too much play in the press and I wanted to try and set those to rest in the record.

I look forward to your — to your questions. And thank you for your support over the years.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you, General.

There are a lot of myths going around town about members of Congress, too, and most of them are true.

(LAUGHTER)

General McCarthy?

MCCARTHY: Senator Chambliss, Senator Nelson, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear on behalf of the Marine Corps Reserve.

General Mike Hagee, the commandant of the Marine Corps was in visiting Marines in the theater a month or so ago

and he was quoted as saying, "I understand that two-thirds of you..." in this group that he was talking to, "... are Reserves. I know you simply as Marines. And looking at performance, I can't tell the difference." That is the quintessential statement of our success as a Marine Corps Reserve.

I'm very grateful for the support that the Congress has provided because it's helped us to do the things that we need to do to meet that standard. And I am enormously proud of the almost 20,000 Marines who are currently mobilized. That's about half of the selected Reserve in the Marine Corps Reserve. It's a combat force — 75 percent of those Marines and the sailors who serve with us are forward deployed in the Central Command's area of operation. They are doing what they know how to do. They are not over stressed. They are — they are well prepared and, as both General Helmley and Admiral Totushek have said, they are glad, I believe to be — to be doing what it is they are doing.

I do thank you for your support and I look forward to answering your questions.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you, General McCarthy.

General Batbie?

BATBIE: Mr. Chairman, Senator Nelson, I want to thank you for allowing me to be here today and testify on behalf of General Sherrard and the nearly 76,000 members of the Air Force Reserve.

Over 13,000 citizen airmen are mobilized today. And due to one tier of readiness, they are performing brilliantly in the — today's total force.

I want to acknowledge that this committee took the lead in some key legislation — excuse me — legislation for us this year, including the repealing of the prohibition on active Guard and Reserve security forces personnel and, like other members have said, extending the — from 10 to 14 years the time to use the Montgomery GI Bill Selective Reserve Entitlement, as well as many others, which help us recruit and retain our quality people.

With your help, the Air Force Reserve will be a viable force for the future. And I look forward to answering any questions you might have, sir.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you, General.

We don't have to ask for that new headquarters building anymore. We're...

BATBIE: No, sir. We're...

CHAMBLISS: ... getting there now.

BATBIE: ... — half finished right now.

CHAMBLISS: There you go. And we're proud to have it at Robins, too.

Admiral Totushek, I appreciated the profiles of the individual Naval Reserve sailors that you set forth in your written statement and endorse your description of them as true heroes, because you're absolutely right. I couldn't agree with you more that the ordinary people in the Guard and Reserve certainly do extraordinary things, day in and day out.

I asked Secretary Hall this question about the justification for the proposed reduction of 1,900 sailors in the Navy's selected Reserve personnel for FY 2004. And I'd like your response to that same question. And what concerns, if any, do you have about this reduction?

TOTUSHEK: Well, Senator, I am a little bit concerned that it might be the beginning of a trend that I would — I would not like to see continue. Basically what happened, as we were doing the prime (ph) '04 deliberations, Navy had started to work with the Marine Corps on Navy-Marine Corps aviation integration. The first steps in that were to do away with a couple of Reserve squadrons — a Naval Reserve squadron and a Marine Corps Reserve squadron. Part of those reductions are as a — as a result of that action. The other parts come from decommissioning of several Reserve platforms that we have done over the last couple of years. There is a LST out in Hawaii that is being decommissioned and, of course, our mine countermeasure — there is a platform down in — down in Engleside (ph). So those, all told, left us with a net reduction.

We don't think that is a — is a trend, but we certainly are going to work hard to make sure it's not.

CHAMBLISS: I understand that the Navy and Marine Corps are undertaking a TACAIR integration effort to consolidate the Department of the Navy's F-18 squadrons and prepare the way for the Joint Strike Fighter. While I applaud the effort

to create greater efficiencies and I know that JSF is going to be a great addition to both the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps, I am concerned about the potential impact to the naval air station in Atlanta, particularly given the unique arrangement we have a Dobbins Air Reserve Base with both Air Force and Naval Reserve personnel and aircraft. The presence of both services allows us to take advantage of common runways, facilities and transportation corridors supporting the base.

What can you tell me about the Department of the Navy — about how the Department of the Navy is approaching the TACAIR integration effort? And what are you in the process — where are you in the process? And are you taking into account existing efficiencies at installations that have multiple operational missions?

TOTUSHEK: Yes, sir, we are looking at any place we site any of our squadrons to try and make them as joint as possible. All of our Naval Reserve installations are joint Reserve bases. And we have oftentimes all of the Reserve components represented there.

In the case of Robins, the initial reduction was to be one Naval Reserve squadron and one Marine Corps Reserve squadron. We have not yet determined which squadron that will be. We have undertaken a study, at my request, at the end game apollo (ph) four (ph) submission because I didn't feel like we had done the real analytics to get us to the — to the right answer of which squadron should go, if at all, because it may be — it may turn out, as we get through this process that we're doing with Navy right now, that it would make more sense for us to keep the three Reserve squadrons and do away with the active squadron, for instance.

So those negotiations are ongoing right now. We've brief the vice chief of naval operations within the month. And we'll see where we go from there. But...

CHAMBLISS: What's your timetable for that, do you know?

TOTUSHEK: It'll be done here very quickly because we need to put it in for apollo (ph) — for a PR' 05 to make sure that we've got the right proposal throughout the FYDP.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

General McCarthy, in your written statement you indicate that the Marine Corps Reserve is preparing to create two new security battalions that will provide a dual-use capacity consisting of eight anti-terrorism force protection platoons and augmentation unit for the Marine Corps' chemical biological incident response force.

Please explain how these Marine Corps Reservists will be augmented into these units. And what area will the Marines involved come from? And when will the capability be realized?

MCCARTHY: Senator Chambliss, the security battalions will be stand-alone Marine Corps Reserve units and the only integrated part of that will be, as you have indicated, the augmentation cell that's a part of one of the security battalions that will go to CEBER (ph). We anticipate that most of those Marines will come from the metropolitan Washington area. They will need to drill and work closely with CEBER (ph), which, as you know is down at Indianhead, Maryland. And so the recruiting draw — the best place for us to draw Marines for that detachment will be, I suspect, in the metropolitan Washington area.

But the rest of the two security battalions will be scattered all over the country. They are — they'll be in about 20 different locations, I think. And they will not be a blended or integrated unit. They'll be stand-alone Marine Corps Reserve units.

CHAMBLISS: This is going to be addressed to — I'd like each of you to comment on this — many of our Guard and Reserve members and their families are experiencing extended separation and in some cases hardship due to reduced earnings and other factors. The stresses that are currently at work on many active duty and Reserve personnel are severe.

We've seen some situations of domestic violence and other types of violent activity on the part of some of our personnel as a result of the heavy stress that they've all been under.

What are you doing to ensure that necessary family support services are in place to reach out to all Guard and Reserve family members? And how reliant are you on volunteers to perform these outreach efforts?

General Helmley?

HELMLEY: Thank you, Senator.

First of all, in the preparation for a mobilization and deployment, we go through an extensive briefing to both families, as well as the members. As some of my fellow chiefs have noted, the current mobilization tempo with regard to very short notice has not provided us the amount of time that we would have desired to conduct those activities. But that includes briefings by members of the Chaplain's Corp, which explains what happens to spouse groups or to families upon separation.

We also provide them briefings before the member returns and coaching. I've sat through these myself. The chaplain members coach the family members — expect changes in your spouse and your father and your mother, et cetera.

We are very reliant on volunteers. Probably 99 percent of our family readiness people who do the work — the heavy lifting, if you will, are volunteers. They are, themselves, family members — loved ones of members of the Army Reserve. We have about a \$4 million shortfall that we should be able to make up in staffing support for family readiness.

During Desert Shield, Desert Storm we had virtually no family readiness program in place. It is extensive, it is functioning, it is working. We are concerned about the stresses that you noted. About 4,000 of our people are on a second consecutive year of mobilization. That adds to that challenge.

I don't want to take up the time from my fellow chiefs, but we are addressing the very issues you cited with regard to the stresses and strains of the separation. And we prepare them on the front end through briefings, through coaching, through pamphlets. And we prepare them on the back end before the member returns home.

CHAMBLISS: Admiral?

TOTUSHEK: We didn't do a very good job of this in Desert Storm one. And we learned a lot from that. So when — after 9/11 and it was evident that we were going to start mobilizing a lot of people, we put a lot of time and effort into establishing groups to make sure that we had the support systems in place.

A couple things I'll highlight. First of all, we do use a lot of volunteers. All of our ombudsmen — and they probably should be called ombudsperson because we do have men doing it now, as well, are volunteers. They are at the unit level. They are the people that have the information or can get the information so that the family member has a point of contact at every one of our Reserve centers.

We also have followed in on the Navy system to use a Web-enable product called Family Lines that allows our people to go online and find out the question to virtually anything that they would need to know, including if you want to talk to somebody, here are some counseling lines so that you can call and get 24 hours a day support.

So I think the systems have been bolstered very, very well. I'm very proud of the effort we have taken to make sure that our folks aren't left hanging out there, especially out in the middle of the country where there isn't a base around to get that kind of support.

CHAMBLISS: General McCarthy?

MCCARTHY: Senator, I'm in exactly the same situation. We are all responding to what we learned 10 — 12 years ago. I think we responded very well. We built a key volunteer network in each unit. We require each unit to have a key volunteer network and a trained key volunteer coordinator.

We have just, in the last year or so, started to buttress that with another Marine Corps program called LYNX (ph), which is a spouse-to-spouse mentoring program. And we're pushing that out in a — kind of a ripple effect and have gotten that out fairly well to the — to the force. We still have a lot more work to do on that.

We, like everybody else, depend tremendously on volunteers — on spouses and mothers and fathers — to be these key volunteers. And they have responded tremendously.

We also require that each unit have an officer and, upon mobilization, they have an officer who is on active duty to serve as the family readiness officer. And that officer becomes a link between the deployed commander and the — and the families back home. And we feel that that's been a pretty effective communications tools.

And then the last thing, we were given the opportunity and jumped at it to participate in a Department of Defense sponsored and paid for effort that is called the One Source. And One Source is a 800 telephone number program like civilian employers employee assistance programs that enable family members to call in and be referred by telephone to professional around the country.

We're just getting started with that. But we — the preliminary indications are very good and I think that's going to be a

huge plus for us.

So the proof, as you say, will be in the pudding when we — when we have been in it a while longer and when people start coming back. But in terms of doing some things proactively, I'm pleased with where we are.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

BATBIE: Senator, like the others, we didn't do very well during Storm. Since that time, we added in a bunch of full-time folks and part-time people that we can call up.

Last year we called up 29 family support people and brought them to duty, along with our full-time people, to manage some of these issues.

When the Fort Bragg incident started happening, we sent our medical folks down there to participate in some of the panels to learn what we could — what was the root cause of those problems. And we decided to team up with the medical, the family support and the chaplain folks to be there when the people started coming home after the major part of Afghanistan was over to try to see if we could short circuit some of those issues that might pop up.

Don't know if it's been successful, but we haven't had any major things pop up in the Air Force Reserve since that time.

We've got critical care or critical incident intervention team that we've put out there for major things that may happen with a unit. If we have a major loss of life or something overseas and try to get back to the local unit with experts that will come in from the headquarters or from other units to try to short circuit some of the things that might pop up in that regard.

CHAMBLISS: OK.

Thanks very much.

Senator Nelson?

BEN NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is just a general question for any of you — as you saw your Reserve airmen, soldiers and Marines being mobilized and as you saw them come into active duty in support of the global war on terrorism, did you find that the current statutory mobilization authorities were adequate? In other words, was the law adequate to permit you to do this? Or are there any changes that we might consider as it might relate to what you have learned from the war on terrorism and mobilization there?

HELMLEY: Senator Nelson, if I may, in my judgment, the current statutory authorities are adequate. Our implementation of those statutory authorities has candidly been flawed. And it has resulted in very short notice — in many cases less than five to 10 days notice. And in those cases, the part that bothers me is that I had visibility over those requirements ahead of time, but without the authority, I could not hand a set — pardon me — a set of orders to the Army Reserve soldier.

Without those official orders, the Reserve member is somewhat powerless in terms of official documentation to inform their employer — to go to the issues that you discussed with the first panel on tuition at school — with regard to severing of contracts, rental agreements, leases, placing into abeyance, getting a power of attorney — making those kinds of arrangements to enter active duty and to subsequently deploy.

And so that's my judgment that the authorities and legislation are adequate. We have got to, though, move a World War II linear mobilization process to a 21st century model that gives us some flexibility, as my peers noted, down at the working level so that we can make that more predictable for our members and provide them more advanced notice.

TOTUSHEK: I would agree, Senator Nelson, that General Helmley has it right. The thing I would add is that OSD is working on the process. I don't think anybody is really happy with it and we are — we are trying to tackle it.

BEN NELSON: Good. Thank you.

MCCARTHY: I adopt entirely the statement of General Helmley. I — the only point I would make in addition is I give the administration great credit for going to partial mobilization when they did rather than trying to go through the PSCR sort of a stair step process. That enabled us to mobilize people from the individual ready Reserve, which was a — was a big help and I think was the — was the right call under the circumstances.

But we do have some execution work to do.

BATBIE: I can't disagree with anything that's been said, but I would add — point out one thing that we've learned during this mobilization that it's additive up to the two-year mark, so you can call Reservists for two months now, let them off, call them two months next year and — up to two years. And we're starting to get into that a little bit, but I don't know what kind of long-range effect that would have if we did that over an extended period.

BEN NELSON: Thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAMBLISS: Thank you.

And we've just had another vote call, so we are going to call this hearing to a conclusion. And I appreciate the testimony of all of our witnesses today. It's been an excellent review of critical issues that are of concern to us every day as we prepare for what is going to be an extended war.

We'll keep your comments and concerns in mind as we review the Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization Request. And I look forward to working with you. And thank you for your participation today.

We do have all of the statements of the respective witnesses. They will be entered into the record. They're very informative and we'll consider those as we move forward.

I would also like to enter a GAO report titled Preliminary Observations Related to Income, Benefits and Employer Support for Reservists During Mobilizations. This GAO report was just released today, Wednesday, March 19, 2003. And we're going to insert that report, also, into the record.

Gentlemen, once again, thank you for your splendid service to our country. We appreciate you being here today and this hearing is adjourned.

END

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[—] – Indicates could not make out what was being said.[off mike] – Indicates could not make out what was being said.

PERSON: SAXBY CHAMBLISS (94%); SUSAN M COLLINS (57%); ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE (57%); EDWARD M KENNEDY (56%); BILL NELSON (52%); BENJAMIN NELSON (52%);

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